

THE  
SOMNIUM SCIPIONIS  
OF  
MARCUS TULLIUS CICERO.

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH, WITH A PREFACE  
AND NOTES,

BY

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## P R E F A C E.

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THE speculations of some of the ancient philosophers of Greece and Rome on the character of God, and on the nature, origin, and destiny of the human soul, are so enlightened, that they have appeared to many to have been indirectly derived from a Divine revelation. A perusal of the Dialogues of Plato, the *Somnium Scipionis* of Cicero, and some other ancient writings, will, I think, lead to the conclusion, that the same Divine spirit which inspired Patriarchs, Prophets, Evangelists, and Apostles, occasionally animated and instructed a few superior minds, even before the Day-spring from on high had fully illuminated the world. Deeply as we are indebted to the Christian revelation, there are yet some points, in the relation of man to higher powers, which it does not even profess to elucidate. Of all the mysteries by which we are surrounded, perhaps the greatest is the origin of moral and physical evil. Neither

Divine revelation, nor human reason, occupied in the investigation of the visible world, has hitherto afforded a clear and satisfactory answer to the question, Why does a Being, who is supreme in power and benevolence, permit the existence of moral and physical evil? The former attribute seems to imply that he is able, the latter that he is willing, to prevent it. The actual existence both of moral and physical evil is but too evident. Let us at the same time keep in view the consolatory truth, that the glorious gospel of Christ is proposed to man as the great and sovereign antidote. Divine revelation and human experience concur in declaring, that through sin man has deeply offended that omnipotent Creator, who is without variableness or shadow of turning; and that sin has brought death into the world, with all our woe. Let us then acknowledge the mournful truth, though its causes have not been fully developed. Thus only shall we be able to reconcile the present unhappy condition of the ruling inhabitant of this planet, with the beauty and harmony so conspicuous in all other created beings visible to us. From some intimations in the three first chapters of the book of Genesis, we may infer, that, before the fall, man lived on terms

of amity and intimacy with the Triune God, (or perhaps, to speak more correctly,) with the second person in that adorable and inscrutable being.\* As soon, however, as he became conscious that he had deeply offended his infinitely pure and powerful Creator, henceforth he looked up to him, not as a kind and beneficent parent, but as an angry and omnipotent judge and avenger. The love of God was, from that moment, extinguished in his heart, and was succeeded by slavish fear and hatred of him. We are accordingly told, that, after the fall, Adam, for the first time, endeavoured to hide himself from his Maker; saying, "I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." Man, however, has ever continued to be sensible of his weakness, and consequent dependence on higher powers. Unable then to endure the Triune God of the Bible,

\* "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten son, who is in the bosom of the father, he hath declared him;" *i. e.* hath made him manifest to us. The Christian revelation seems to imply that the supreme God, the *Deus Optimus Maximus* of enlightened heathens, rules the affairs of this planet, through that emanation of himself, which consists of Deity and humanity united in one person. In the Old Testament, we often read of the Supreme Being appearing to patriarchs and prophets. May we not believe, that the Being, who really appeared, on all these occasions, was Christ; in other words, all these appearances were anticipations of his incarnation.

he endeavoured to find some other object of dependence, excelling in power and dignity; yet inferior in moral perfections to the great Being whom he had offended. Accordingly, the earliest aberration from the worship of the Creator, was adoration of the sun, moon, planets, and fixed stars; which is at once the most ancient and the least corrupt species of idolatry: a fact sufficiently proven by some passages of the book of Job, the most ancient of all human writings now extant. Though the moral corruption of man increased with a fearful rapidity, yet he found it impossible either to silence the still small voice of conscience, (which is the voice of God himself addressed in a whisper to the soul,) or totally to forget his dependence on superior powers. Hence the next step in apostacy from his Creator, was to discover, if possible, some higher beings, able indeed to protect and uphold, yet willing to excuse, or even to sanction, the grossest moral turpitude. Hence arose those baser species of idolatry, which were practised by the Egyptians, the Canaanites, and other heathen nations. It is a most humiliating fact in the history of man, that, left to himself, he has frequently worshipped as deities, beings whom he believed to have been stained by the most enormous moral delinquen-

cies; and whose example accordingly permitted, and even sanctioned them. If we compare St Paul's\* brief and graphic description of the corrupt opinions and practices prevalent among the politest nations of antiquity, with the sad evidences of its reality, brought to light by the modern discovery of those ancient cities, Herculaneum and Pompeii, † we shall, I conceive, readily arrive at the conclusion, that “as the fall of man excited in his heart fear and hatred of the omnipotent Creator; so these feelings led him to idolatry, which, in its turn, permitted, and even sanctioned, every possible aberration from the Divine will.”

One grand object common to the Mosaic Institutions, and the Christian Revelation, as it was more fully developed in the books of the New Testament, was the substitution of the worship of the Triune God for idolatry. The latter, however, embraced two other objects: it clearly revealed life and immortality; and it exhibited the Triune God as being at once righteous and merciful; “a

\* See the commencement of the Epistle to the Romans.

† The Neapolitans have never been remarkable for moral purity. We may, therefore, infer, that the most dreadful evidences of the corrupt practices of antiquity have developed themselves at Herculaneum and Pompeii, from the fact, that after each new excavation, entrance is permitted to no female, before a thorough expurgation has been accomplished.

just God and a Saviour ;” unable to endure even the minutest moral obliquity ; yet ready, through the efficacy of the great atonement, to pardon the deepest guilt, on the sole condition of sincere repentance. We learn, not only from the writings of Plato, Cicero, and other ancient philosophers, but also even from the books of the New Testament, that God has occasionally enlightened some superior minds, even independently of the Christian Revelation. St Luke informs us, in the book of the Acts of the Apostles, that the prayers and alms of Cornelius, the Roman Centurion, were accepted, even before he had heard the name of Christ. The conclusion drawn by St Peter from the whole transaction between himself and Cornelius, was this : “ Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons ; but that in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.” Scripture and experience concur in showing us, that the more ardently and sincerely any man strives to perform the will of his Creator, the more is the assistance which he receives from above. “ Draw near to God,” saith St James, “ and he will draw near to you.” The parable of the talents was expressly intended to teach and illustrate the same important truth. On



the one hand, we find that God has graciously led some minds to the perception of momentous truths, independently of the light of the Christian Revelation; and on the other hand, human depravity has so far nullified that revelation by corrupt additions or subtractions, as to have actually rendered it subservient to the very evils which it was intended to eradicate. The former of these propositions is well illustrated by the beautiful composition I have here translated; the latter, by the doctrinal heresies, as to the Christian revelation, now too prevalent in the world. The speaker in the *Somnium Scipionis* is Publius Æmilianus Scipio, the conqueror of Hannibal and of Carthage; called also the younger Africanus. He was the younger son of Paulus Æmilius, but had been adopted into the Cornelian family by Publius, the son of the first Africanus. Cicero represents him as relating his dream to his friends Lælius, Polybius, Panætius, and some others. We learn from this beautiful piece, that those sublime doctrines, the immortality of the human soul, its necessary existence and consciousness, from eternity to eternity, the supremacy of one Deus Optimus Maximus above all other celestial beings, and man's accountability to him, were embraced

and believed by many of the ancient philosophers. It also proves, that some interesting facts in geography and astronomy, the discovery of which is usually ascribed to the moderns, were actually known to the ancients.

It was well remarked by the great Dr Samuel Johnson, that although the numerous sects, who call themselves Christians, exhibit many very striking discrepancies, yet all erroneous doctrines exhibit one grand feature in common. They all tend to soothe and to satisfy the guilty conscience of man, either by proposing to him a substitute for the strict and punctual performance of the will of God, or by endeavouring to show, that, independently of any substitute, the will of God may be violated or neglected with impunity. I here have in my eye those two grand perversions of the Christian Revelation, Popery and Unitarianism. That church which with arrogance, and with gross injustice to her more ancient rival, the Greek church, claims as her exclusive right the title *Catholic*, and whose whole system has been denounced by an inspired apostle, as a MYSTERY OF INIQUITY,\* has so perverted that very Revelation, one

\* See St Paul's Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, the whole of the second Chapter.

of whose chief objects was the eradication of idolatry, as to have actually enlisted it in the propagation of that Satanic work. She has accomplished this by the impious omission of the second article of the Mosaic Decalogue, in every country where she believes her power to be supreme; and by garbling, and mistranslating it, wherever her supremacy is doubtful.\*

On the other hand, they who absurdly and disingenuously call themselves Unitarians, deny the infallibility of the inspired teachers of the Christian Religion; and thus are able to arrive at the comfortable conclusion, that they may safely reject every fact and doctrine contained in the holy Scriptures, which may appear to them to militate against the

\* I possess a very fine copy of a work entitled "Officium Beatae Mariae virginis, Pii Vti Pontificis maximi Jussu Editum, Antwerpiae, Ex officina Plantiniana, Apud Balthazarem et Joannem Moretos, Anno Domini, MDCXVIII.," *i. e.*, printed and published 218 years ago. Under the title *Decem Dei Præcepta, quae in Decalogo continentur*, ten commandments are delivered. But how is this done! *The Second Commandment is altogether omitted; and the tenth is cunningly divided into two, for the purpose of making up the true number.* I had frequently heard this trick imputed to the church of Rome: but did not believe it, till I saw this book. In Ireland, and probably in some other countries, where the Romish priesthood is watched and controlled by a rival hierarchy, they are less audacious: they are content to make the Second Commandment there tacitly permit idolatry, by the following mistranslation: "*Thou shalt not bow down to them, so as to adore them.*"

pride, the corruption, and the temporal interests of man. Accordingly, they deny that human depravity is so great as the word of God, and experience declare it to be. They deny that sin is an evil of infinite magnitude, and therefore requires an atonement of infinite efficacy. They overlook the inflexible justice of God, while they readily acknowledge his infinite mercy. They believe, or affect to believe, that though, in his physical government of the universe, the Supreme Being is without variableness, or shadow of turning, yet in his moral government he is sufficiently lax and liberal. Is it credible that men, who call themselves Christians, presume, in contradiction of the words of Christ himself, to deny the consciousness of human souls, between the death and the resurrection of the body; and to maintain the opinion that all human beings will ultimately enjoy the most perfect happiness.\* Let them blush, when they find, after a perusal of this beautiful piece, that a learned heathen, not enlightened by the Christian revelation, far excelled them in one important article of religious faith.

\* See the parable of Dives and Lazarus, as related by St Luke. See the account of the transfiguration of Christ. See the awful sentence denounced by Christ against Judas Iscariot; and the words addressed by Christ to one of the two malefactors crucified with him.

One very pernicious error, now unhappily too prevalent, is that, since religion embraces relations between God and man, and not those which subsist between man and man, human governments and laws ought not at all to interfere with it. If however, it be also true, that sound religion is not less essential to the temporal than to the eternal interests of human beings ; and if it be true that the peculiar doctrines of the Christian religion have been authoritatively proclaimed by inspired teachers, then the fallacy of this opinion will readily appear. When we wish to instruct the young in any art, science or language, we at once subject them to the authority and discipline of qualified teachers. To these teachers they necessarily give a temporary credit, as long as they are occupied in learning the elementary parts of each subject. Why should religion alone, of all the branches of knowledge, be excepted from this most salutary rule ? In every country, the civil rulers assume to themselves, and exercise the power of punishing those moral delinquencies, which are manifestly injurious to the peace and prosperity of human society. Why should they not also exercise the higher and god-like prerogative of preventing these evils ? If it be true, (as we are assured by Him, who knew what is

in man) that human beings, left to themselves, love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil ; we can scarcely avoid the conclusion, that a national system of sound religious and moral instruction is necessary to the peace and welfare of human society ; and that of religion it may be especially and emphatically proclaimed, that

“ A little learning is a dangerous thing,  
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring ;  
Such shallow draughts intoxicate the brain ;  
But drinking deeper sobers it again,”

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DREAM OF SCIPIO.

[*Scipio is the Speaker.*]

WHEN I had arrived at Africa, as military tribune to the fourth legion, under the Consul Marcus Manilius, I desired nothing more earnestly, than a conference with King Massinissa; whose warm friendship to our family had been produced and cemented by the most efficient causes. As soon as I came into his presence, the good old King embraced me, and we wept together. After a pause, he turned his eyes to Heaven, and said, I render thanks to thee, O Supreme Sun, and also to you the other celestial powers, that, before I depart from this life, I behold in my kingdom and under

this roof, \* Publius Cornelius Scipio, by whose very name I am cheered ; nor has the memory of that excellent, and bravest of men ever departed from my mind. I next inquired of him, as to the affairs of his kingdom, and he interrogated me as to our commonwealth ; and the whole of that day was spent by much mutual discourse on these subjects. I was afterwards received with regal ceremonies ; and our next conference was prolonged to a late hour of the night. Still the good old king could speak only of my grandfather, Africanus, and recapitulated not only his actions but even his speeches. We then withdrew to our chambers ; and both in consequence of the previous long journey, and from the lateness of the hour of retiring, my sleep was unusually sound. On this occasion, owing as I believe to our previous conversation, since the words we utter and the thoughts we conceive while awake, are apt to produce, when we sleep, something which resembles what our poet Ennius relates of Homer, who was frequently the object of his waking thoughts and words, my grandfather Africanus appeared to me in the form with which I was

\* He was called by both names, Æmilianus and Cornelius, indiscriminately.



best acquainted; *i. e.* as he is represented by the painter and the statuary. As soon as I recognized him, I shuddered. On observing this, he said, Be calm, Scipio; cast away fear; and fix on your memory what I am about to say. Do you see that city, which, though compelled by me to succumb to the power of Rome, yet still continues to foment wars, and cannot be at rest?—He then pointed out to me the city of Carthage, from a station which was bright, luminous, and full of stars.

“ You have now come to Africa, in a military capacity, to fight against that proud rival of Rome. Two years hence, you, being then invested with the consular office, will storm and overthrow it; and then you will have acquired by your own merits, a right to your cognomen, Africanus, though you already inherit it from me. When you shall have extirpated Carthage, obtained the honour of a triumph, and the censorship, and shall have been delegated to Egypt, Syria, Asia, and Greece, you will afterwards be chosen consul, the second time, during your absence: you will then bring an important war to a prosperous conclusion; and will exterminate Numantia. When afterwards conveyed to the capitol in a triumphal

chariot, your counsels will excite envy, and be offensive to many. Here, O Africanus! it will be your duty to show to your country the light of your understanding, genius, and wisdom. I see, however, but dimly, what the fates have determined as to these future times. When your age has equalled eight times seven annual circuits of the sun, and when these two numbers, 8 and 7, (both of which are esteemed complete numbers, though for different reasons,\*) shall have filled up your destiny, then the whole empire will look up to you alone, and to your name. On you alone the senate, all good men, our allies, and the Latins will turn their eyes. On you alone the safety of the state will depend. In short, it will be your duty to save the state, by constituting yourself dictator, provided you be able to escape the impious hands of your relatives.”—When I had proceeded thus far in my dream, Lælius vented an exclamation, and the rest of my auditors uttered a groan. I gently smiled, and said, Do not, I pray you, awake me prematurely from my sleep; but hear the remainder. My grandfather thus went on:—“Know, O Africanus! as a stimulus for increasing your patriotic ardour, that, for all those great and good

\* An allusion to the Platonic doctrine of the power of numbers.

men whose lives on earth have been employed in promoting the safety, interests, and glory, of their country, a place in heaven is reserved, where they are to live in happiness for ever. Of all the transactions of the lower world, none are more acceptable to that supreme God, who rules the universe, than those human councils or assemblies, constituted by law and justice, which are usually called States. They who have employed their lives in the noble work of the rule and conservation of states, return\* hither, when they leave the earth.”—At this part of my dream, though I was alarmed, not so much by the fear of death, as of treason on the part of my relatives, I yet so far recovered myself, as to ask him whether my father Paulus and others, whom we on earth *know to be dead*, and suppose to be extinct, were really still in existence. “Are they still in life? said he: Yes, they alone may be truly said to live, who have escaped from their corporeal bonds, as from a dungeon; but your life on earth, as you call it, is in reality death. You may also, if you turn your eyes, see your father Paulus approaching us.”

As soon as I recognized him, I shed tears abun-

\* Cicero believed in the necessary existence of the soul from eternity to eternity.

dantly ; he then, embracing and kissing me, forbade me to weep. As soon as, having suppressed my sobs and tears, I was able to speak, I said to him, “ O my most revered and excellent father, since this your present state is life, as you and my grandfather have assured me, why should I remain longer on earth ? Why may I not instantly come to you ? ” — “ That,” said he, “ cannot be, for unless that God, whose temple is all that you now behold, should liberate you from your corporeal bonds, an entrance into this place is impossible. Such is the law to which human beings are subjected : they are to inhabit, (during a space of time determined by God) that globe seated in the\* centre of this magnificent temple which is called the Earth ; and have each of them received a soul derived from those sempiternal fires, which you call stars and planets : which are round, globular, and animated by divine souls, and perform their periodical circuits with astonishing celerity. For these reasons, my dear Publius, (*i. e. when you consider the divine origin and nature of the soul,*) it is your duty, and that of all the good and the pious, to retain the soul in the cus-

\* Here the intelligent reader will perceive that Cicero embraced the Ptolemaic system of astronomy.

tody of the body. Nor can you lawfully migrate from human life on earth, without the permission and command of that God, who bestowed on your body its animating soul; since by so doing you would incur the guilt of shrinking from those human duties which God has assigned to you. Do you, O Scipio! following the example set you by this your grandfather, and by me who begat you, cultivate justice and piety; which as they are important in private life, so are pre-eminently useful in the public affairs of our country. A life so spent is the road to heaven, and to that august assembly of those who have gone before us: and who, released from their corporeal bonds, inhabit the place you now behold." At this part of my dream, turning my eyes, I saw that very resplendent circlet shining among the stars, which you on earth call the *Orbis Lacteus*, or Milky-Way, as the Greeks call it, *galaxe*. As I viewed the universe from that position, every thing around me appeared glorious and wonderful. I saw many stars which to us on earth are invisible; their magnitudes too are immense, far exceeding what we commonly suppose them to be. Of all the stars, the smallest is that which is the most remote from the luminaries of the celestial sphere, and the nearest

to our central earth, and which shines with a borrowed light. I saw many stars much larger than the earth; and looking down on the latter, it seemed to me so small, that I was almost ashamed of our great empire, as we call it, and which fills up a mere point even of our small globe. As I continued attentively to turn my eyes to the earth, Africanus said, "How long, I pray, do you intend to fix your mind upon earthly objects? Do you not see to what a magnificent temple you have been transported? (*If the central globe, the earth, be included*) the universe may be said to consist of nine spheres or parts; of these the outermost is the largest, including the others within itself; the great Supreme God ruling, and controlling all. To the celestial sphere belong the sempiternal fixed stars. It embraces within itself seven other spheres or circles, whose planets have a motion the reverse of that of the stars belonging to the celestial sphere. The next is that occupied by the planet Saturn, as you call it. Within his orbit is that of Jupiter, a planet esteemed prosperous and salutary to the human race. Next is the orbit of the planet Mars, of a deep fiery red colour, and dreadful to the inhabitants of the earth. Next to the orbit of Mars, and as it were midway between the celestial sphere and your central earth, is that of the

glorious sun ; the leader, the prince, and the regulator of the other luminaries,—the soul and ruler of the universe ; of so enormous magnitude as to illuminate and pervade all things by his rays. Next in order to the sun are Venus and Mercury, satellites as it were (or attendants) on the sun. The smallest and lowest of the orbits, is that of the moon, a planet which shines by reflecting the light received from the sun. Below the moon there is nothing but what is mortal, and perishing, if we except the souls of men, which are the gift of the immortal gods. Beyond the moon, everything is eternal, and unchangeable. As to our central \* earth, the ninth in succession, it is without motion, and all bodies gravitate towards it.” On recovering myself, after the astonishment, and admiration, which this wonderful scene inspired, I said to Africanus, “ what is this sound, so loud and so sweet, which salutes † my ears ?”—“ That sound,” said he, “ is the music, consisting of distinct notes skilfully harmonized, which is produced by the motion and impulse of the several stars and planets through their orbits, and which, by the union of acute with grave notes, constitutes a concert at once varied

\* Eight orbits were believed to surround the earth.

† The Platonic *music of the spheres*.

and harmonious. Nor is it possible that motions so stupendous should be silently performed. It is a rule in music, that the two extremities of a musical instrument produce, the one a very acute, the other a very grave note. This is the reason why the acutest sound is that produced by the rapid motions of the celestial sphere; while the gravest is caused by the slow motions of the moon, whose orbit is the smallest of all, and nearest to that of the earth. The central earth, being without motion, generates no sound at all. Though the surrounding orbits be eight in number, yet the celestial motions generate only seven distinct notes; since the two planets, Mercury and Venus, produce one and the same note. The number seven is indeed the nodus or terminating point\* of almost all things. Those who are skilled in music have, by imitating this celestial concert, in the construction of musical instruments, opened for themselves a return to this heavenly habitation; as others also have done, whose exalted genius led them to the cultivation of divine studies, while living on earth. The ears of mortals are insensible to this music of the spheres, owing to the intensity of the

\* An allusion to the doctrine of the mystic power of the number seven.



sound, nor is any sense less acute than that of hearing among mankind. In a similar way it happens, that where the Nile, not far from its origin, precipitates its waters from lofty mountains, at the tremendous falls called *Catadupa*, the people of that country are deaf, from the stunning nature of the sound. Now, the sounds produced by the constant revolutions of the universe are so intensely loud, that human ears are unable to receive them. In like manner, human eyes, overwhelmed by the dazzling lustre of the solar rays, cannot look on the sun."

Though filled with admiration of the scene around me, yet I could not withdraw my eyes from the earth. Africanus observing this, said, "I perceive that even yet you are contemplating the abode and habitation of men. Now, as you find it to be comparatively so small, let that consideration lead you constantly to contemplate (set your affections on) heavenly objects, and to despise those which are earthly. What celebrity among men, or what glory worth striving for, is it in your power to acquire? If you look down upon the earth, you will see that the parts of it which are inhabited, and cultivated by man, are few and small; mere spots surrounded by immense deserts: that the

human inhabitants are not only so disjoined from each other, that, as to many countries, mutual communication is impossible ; but that, from the figure of the earth, some of its inhabitants have an oblique position, with respect to others ; some occupy two opposite points of the same hemisphere ; while some nations are actually antipodal to others. Now, assuredly you cannot expect fame or glory from nations and people so situated with respect to you. Again, if you survey the earth, you perceive it is distinguished by certain belts or zones, which divide and surround it. Two of these, most remote from each other, are called the frigid zones, one reaching to the north, the other to the south pole. The central or torrid zone is burned up by the intense solar heat. Two only,\* of the zones are habitable, the north and the south temperate zone. The inhabitants of the latter are of course antipodal to you Romans. As to the northern temperate zone, which you inhabit, observe how small a portion even of that zone belongs to you. In a word, what is the whole globe of the earth, but a small island, surrounded by a wide ocean,

\* The ancients believed the torrid zone, as well as the two frigid zones, not to be habitable. This opinion is alluded to by Horace in the words, "Pone sub curru nimium propinqui solis, in terra domibus negata."

to which you are wont to give the appellations, ATLANTIC, or GREAT; or which still more emphatically you style the OCEAN. This\* globe of yours is flattened at its polar regions, and bulges, or protrudes itself, at the equatorial parts. You see how small that ocean is in reality, though designated by a name so pompous. Is it probable that either your name, or that of any one of us, will ever spread itself from the few regions which are known, inhabited, and cultivated, to that mount Caucasus you behold, or to the countries beyond the Ganges? and as to the other parts of the globe, whether you turn your eyes to the eastern or western, the northern or southern extremities, what inhabitant of these distant lands will ever hear of your name? You see then how narrow is the boundary which circumscribes all human glory. Even they who now speak of you, how long will they continue to do it? Again, supposing that some of our distant posterity, who may have heard from their

\* It is worthy of remark, that Cicero here states that geographical truth as a known fact, which Sir Isaac Newton is usually considered to have first pointed out, and which was afterwards clearly proven by the actual measurement of two degrees; one near to the north pole, the other near to the equator. Cicero states this truth in the words, "verticibus angustior, lateribus latior."

fathers of our celebrity, should wish to hand down the memory of it to future generations, yet do you not perceive that, owing to floods, deluges, conflagrations, and other unavoidable casualties, our glory would not only fail of eternal duration, but could not even be very lasting. Why should you so highly value the praises of posterity? Your name was of course unknown to all those who went before you; a race of men at least as numerous as your predecessors, and probably more virtuous than your posterity will be. Consider again, that of the few who may hear of our name, not one will be acquainted with a single year's complete history of our actions. By this word, year, men, while living on the earth, mean nothing more than that revolution of one of the heavenly bodies, which is completed in twelve months. But when all the\* heavenly bodies shall have returned to the point whence they set out, the real or celestial year will then have been completed,—a year so vast, that I do not venture to say through how many human

\* An allusion to the great Platonic year, supposed to occupy upwards of 26,000 solar years. The fact of the motion of the sun round his own axis, induces modern astronomers to suspect another solar motion, through an immense orbit, around some mighty centre. One of these revolutions constitutes a celestial or Platonic year.

generations it extends. As the sun underwent a great eclipse, and was invisible to human eyes, when the soul of Romulus penetrated into this heavenly temple, so when a similar eclipse shall happen, at the time when the sun and the other celestial bodies shall have arrived at the same relative position ; then all the constellations and planets having finished a circuit, one celestial year will be terminated. Of this year not a twentieth part has yet elapsed. If then you aspire to a return to this blissful place, in which all that is desirable is reserved for the great and the good, at how low a rate should you value that human glory, which you see to be of so short duration, that it can only extend through a small portion of a single celestial year. If, then, your hopes and views are elevated, and extend to this eternal seat and habitation as your ultimate object, you will not court popular applause, nor will you aim at mere human rewards. Let the intrinsic charms of virtue lead you to true glory. As to what others may say of you, regard it not : of course they will speak ; let that be their concern, not yours. You now see that human glory is not only circumscribed by the narrow boundaries of the inhabited parts of the earth, but has never been perpetual as to any one ; since

it is continually destroyed by the mortality of man, and the oblivion of posterity.”

When he had thus far spoken, I said, “ If it be true, as you say, O Africanus ! that the gates of heaven are open to those who deserve well of their country ; although I have, from my childhood, followed the example set before me by you and my father, yet now, with so high a reward in prospect, I shall strive with still greater energy and vigilance.” He then said, “ Your resolution is proper, and be assured of this, that you are not mortal, but only your body ; nor is it true that you are identic with your tangible corporeal part. The soul of every man, that is the man, not the mere body, the object of touch or vision. Know, then, that you are divine ; for that must be divine, which possesses living energy, perception, memory, and foresight : which governs, regulates, and moves the body, over which it presides, as the universe is ruled by the one Supreme God. And as the Eternal God is the mover and governor of the universe, which, in a certain sense, may be styled mortal, even so the sempiternal soul moves the frail body. Whatever has the faculty of perpetual motion, must be eternal ; but whatever gives motion to anything, while its own motion depends on a third extrin-

sic impelling agent, must necessarily cease to live, when it is no longer moved, or impelled. Of that alone which has the power of moving itself, can it be truly said that its motion is perpetual; and for this reason, that a thing cannot desert itself. Such is the nature and source of all motion; it must, either directly or indirectly, depend on a self-moving principle. Now a principle (principium) can have no origin; for every thing is produced from some principle; but a principle cannot owe its birth to something extrinsic to itself, as then it would cease to be a principle. Of that which has no origin, it is also true that it never can become extinct; for a principle once extinguished, were such an event possible, could neither be regenerated from another, nor could it give birth to another; as every thing must have some prime origin or principle. Hence it is evident, that whatever possesses a self-moving power, must have inherent in itself the principle of motion, and can have neither birth nor death. To suppose the contrary, is to believe it possible that the whole frame and motions of the universe might perish, or come to a stand. Since then it is evident, that whatever has the power of moving itself is eternal, who can deny that the souls of men are en-

dowed with this high attribute. Every thing is inanimate, whose motion depends on an extrinsic impelling force ; but we call that animated, or endowed with life, which is moved by its own intrinsic power. If then the soul is distinguished by this self-moving faculty, it never could have had birth or origin, and must be eternal. Do thou exercise it exclusively in exalted pursuits. Such are all those which promote the welfare and glory of your country. If your soul be employed and exercised in these high affairs, it will so much the more quickly arrive at this its proper habitation ; and it will do this the sooner, if even now, while inclosed in the body, it makes excursions abroad, and, contemplating what is without, abstracts itself as much as possible from the body. For those human souls, which have abandoned themselves to corporeal pleasures, and have been so enslaved by lust as to have violated all divine and human laws, when separated from their bodies by death, continue to hover about the earth ; and do not return to this place, till they have suffered punishment through many ages." — Africanus then departed, and I awoke.

FINIS.

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